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Route To:

Subject: Healthy Forests Restoration Act Field Guide

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, Job Corps,
and WO Staff

On December 3, 2003, President Bush signed into law the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to reduce the threat of destructive wildfires while upholding environmental standards and encouraging early public input during review and planning processes. The legislation is based on sound science and helps further the President's Healthy Forests Initiative pledge to care for America's forests and rangelands, reduce the risk of catastrophic fire to communities, help save the lives of firefighters and citizens, and protect threatened and endangered species.

Among other things the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA):

- Strengthens public participation in developing high priority projects;
- Reduces the complexity of environmental analysis allowing federal land agencies to use the best science available to actively manage land under their protection;
- Creates a pre-decisional objections process encouraging early public participation in project planning; and
- Issues clear guidance for court action challenging HFRA projects.

A field guide, developed jointly by the Forest Service and BLM, is now available to assist in rapid implementation of the provisions in the Act. The guide can be downloaded from our HFRA website at <http://frdev.ftcol.wo.fs.fed.us/hfra/>. This site also includes an online NEPA selection tool and other resources that support efficient project planning. I encourage you to explore this web site, try out the tools, and let us know what you think.

In addition to the field guide and the HFRA web site, we have set up a Fuels and Healthy Forests Support Center. The objectives of the support center are to:

1. Provide uniform, timely and accurate information and data for our monthly conference call between the WO and the Regions on fuel and vegetation treatment accomplishments.
2. Serve as a clearinghouse to answer questions most frequently asked about implementation of HFRA and connect field users with subject matter experts.
3. Facilitate discussion on sharing resources between Regions in accomplishing fuel and vegetation treatment targets.



Regional HFRA Coordinators should be contacted first with HFRA related questions. Additional information about support center functions and a listing of Regional HFRA coordinators and phone numbers will also be posted on the HFRA website referenced above. The support center phone number is (202) 205-0899.

HFRA awareness training will be available for viewing on the Internet beginning Monday, March 8th. This training includes a short video clip I filmed a few weeks ago emphasizing the value of these new tools and the tremendous opportunity they give us to make a difference. The awareness training is especially effective when viewed in groups at employee meetings so that discussion can take place immediately afterward.

To download the archived training event:

1. Log on the Intercall mshow website at <http://www.mshow.com/>
2. Enter event number 157662.
3. Follow the online instructions for registration and viewing.

Staff in the Washington Office are currently developing more detailed training on the new tools provided by HFI and HFRA. You will need to host these courses locally as they become available. As always, my staff is available to assist with this.

Again, I cannot overemphasize the import role we play in protecting communities and restoring healthy forests. We have modernized our planning tools for reducing hazardous fuel and managing vegetation. We must now implement the treatments needed to improve land condition.

/s/ Dale N. Bosworth
DALE N. BOSWORTH
Chief